

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-17 have been pending in the application and stand rejected. Claims 7-12 were previously elected for prosecution and stand rejected.

Election/Restriction

The Examiner has maintained the restriction requirement that was imposed in the previous office action and has now made it final. Applicant is herein canceling non-elected claims 1-6 and 13-17. However, Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the subject matter of the non-elected claims in one or more divisional applications.

Rejection of Claims 7 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Figures 1a/1b and Abot

Claims 7 and 9-12 are indicated as being rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by a combination of Applicant's Figures 1a and 1b (labeled "Prior Art") and the Abot reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,777,286). Applicant notes that, although the Examiner only lists claims 7 and 9-12 as being rejected for obviousness on page 3 of the action, the discussion on page 4 of the action makes it appear as though claim 8 has been rejected as well.

The Examiner considers Figures 1a and 1b to disclose the claimed invention except for the use of a positive temperature coefficient receptivity element (PTC) to provide arc suppression. However, he considers Abot to disclose the use of a PTC element within an electrical contactor for the purpose of arc suppression. He concludes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a PTC element, as described in Abot, to provide arc suppression for the electrical contactors shown in Figures 1a and 1b.

In response, Applicant points out that it has amended the claim 7 herein. As amended, claim 7 recites that the blade is asymmetrical to provide for sequential contact

and separation between the contacts. At least this feature is not present in the Abot reference. In Abot, the blade arrangement is symmetrical, and the side contacts 13a and 13b are contacted by the mobile contacts 11a, 11b, respectively, at the same time when the contact bridge 12 is moved downwardly. When Abot's bridge 12 is moved upwardly, the mobile contacts 11a, 11b are separated from the side contacts 13a, 13b at the same time. See Figures 1-3 in Abot.

Applicant submits that the Examiner is misreading Figures 1a and 1b by contending that "the use of spring [34] to control the brid[g]e causes the bridge to be asymmetric so the contact pairs are brought into contact substantially sequentially." Office action, page 4. There is no basis for this conclusion. The same blade arrangement that is used in Abot is used in prior art Figures 1a and 1b. The blade arrangement is symmetrical, and when the blade 30 moves downwardly from the position shown in Figure 1a and 1b, the contacts 20 and 24 on the blade 30 engage the two contacts 18, 22 at the same time since the blade 30 is horizontally disposed. The specification clearly explains that, in this prior art arrangement, contact between the two pairs of contacts 18, 22 and 20, 24 is substantially simultaneous. See page 3, lines 15-16.

In the present invention, by contrast, the blade is asymmetrical and, as a result, the contacts 18, 20 are closed before the contacts 22 and 24. See specification at page 10, lines 1-2; Figure 3. Additionally, the contacts 22, 24 open prior to the contacts 18, 20. See specification at page 10, lines 10-11.

At least because the prior art being used to reject the claims does not disclose or suggest an asymmetrical blade or sequential contact and separation, claims 7 and 9-12 should be allowable. Claims 18-23, which have been added herein, should be allowable as well.

CONCLUSION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees deemed necessary for this response to **Deposit Account No. 13-0010 (SQD-1019-US)**, maintained by Madan, Mossman & Sriram. The Examiner is invited to discuss this matter with Applicant's attorneys should any questions arise.

Respectfully submitted,

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